

Support, Comfort, and Love Your Child.

A hand on the shoulder, pat on the head, or a kind word can help soothe and support your child. Tell your child you love him and that you will be there for him always. Remind him of other people who love him and care about him, like relatives, friends, and other people around him.

Why are these activities important?

We can all use a few extra hugs these days. These activities will help your child to:

- ✓ Know that you're OK
- ✓ Feel loved when you're not there with him
- ✓ Know that he can find you if he needs you
- ✓ Understand that there are people all around him who care
- ✓ Recognize people in his support network or community
- ✓ Know who to trust outside of his immediate family



AFFIRMATION

**Cross the river in a crowd and
the crocodile won't eat you.**

~ Madagascar Proverb

What you need

- ✓ Poem on page 24
- ✓ Construction paper
- ✓ Crayon or pencil

Activity 1: It takes a village

This activity is a way for your child to think about the people in his life who give him love and support. Many families have people who help and support them as their families grow. Sometimes, these people are called an extended family or a “village.”

Reading this poem together will help your child know that, even when Mom or Dad is away, there are still plenty of loving adults to care for him. You can also use this activity to name a trusted adult that your child can go to when you’re not there.

1. Read the poem on page 24 with your child.
2. Ask your child what he thinks about the poem, and how it makes him feel. Talk about the ideas in the poem.
3. Ask your child who is in his village. Talk about people who were in your village when you were growing up, and who is in your village now. Tell your child stories about your childhood and the people you turned to.
4. Have your child recall times when he asked someone else for help. Or, use these questions to help him talk about his village:
 - ✓ Who would you go to if you wanted a hug?
 - ✓ Who are your favorite playmates (or best friends)?
 - ✓ If you were scared, who would help you feel safe?
 - ✓ Who cooks your favorite foods?
 - ✓ If you wanted someone to read you a story, who would you ask?

- ✓ If you just won first prize in a contest or race, who would you tell?
 - ✓ Who are the people that love you and care about you?
5. Write down some of his answers on pages 25-26. Go over the list together. Add pictures of your child and the people on the list, if you want to. Save the list to use with other activities in this book.





IN MY VILLAGE

By Paula Young Shelton

*When I'm afraid
Of the dark at night
My granddaddy's big hands
Hold me tight*

*When I am sad
And feeling gray
My auntie's smile
Brightens up my day*

*When I am lonely
With no one to care
My friend is there
With funny stories to share*

*When I'm worried
And don't know what to do
My mama's comforting words
Help to see me through*

*I can call my daddy
When I'm in a mess*

*If I need to talk
My teacher is the best*

*My brother is the one
When I want to have fun*

*And when I need someone to care
My sister is always there*

*Our village is a special thing
Made of family, friends and preachers,
Neighbors, shopkeepers and teachers.*

*The village protects us, keeps us safe
Molds us, shapes us, shows us the way.
Helps us to make it through each and every day.*

Activity 1: It takes a village

✓ Who would you go to if you wanted a hug?

✓ Who are your favorite playmates (or best friends)?

✓ If you were scared, who would help you feel safe?

✓ Who cooks your favorite foods?

✓ If you wanted someone to read you a story, who would you ask?

☑ If you just won first prize in a contest or race, who would you tell?

☑ Who are the people that love you and care about you?

Activity 2: Family treasure box

In this activity, you and your child will make a family treasure box to hold precious memories. School-aged children are often concrete in their thinking—they need to touch or see something to understand it.

This activity gives your child a place to collect things he can touch and see that mark special times or experiences. Your child can also keep presents or items from special people in his treasure box. So, no matter what is going on around him, the family treasure box lets your child see and touch things from the good times and good people in his life.

1. Lay out the box and the other materials you have for the activity. Let your child pick paper, newspaper comics, fabric scraps, or other materials to cover the outside of the box. Help your child cut the paper and glue or tape it to the box.
2. Let him draw on the box with markers or crayons, add stickers to the box, glue shells, buttons, or beads on the box, or decorate it in some other way. Encourage your child to be creative. Let him design the box to show who he is and what he likes.
3. Help your child find things to keep in the box. These items should remind him of special people, places, moments, and events in his life. He can also include things that make him feel good and loved. For example, he may want to keep these objects in the box:
 - ✓ Pictures of his family or loved ones
 - ✓ A piece of a baby blanket
 - ✓ A favorite book that mom used to read to him

What you need

- ✓ Shoebox or other small box
- ✓ Glue
- ✓ Crayons or markers
- ✓ Wrapping paper, tissue paper and/or construction paper or fabric scraps
- ✓ Shells, buttons, and/or beads
- ✓ Popsicle sticks or strips of cardboard



- ✓ Ticket stubs from the game he and dad went to together
 - ✓ A program from his brother's graduation
 - ✓ A hair ribbon from his sister
 - ✓ A birthday card from an aunt
 - ✓ A recipe for cookies or cornbread that his grandma makes
 - ✓ Trading cards or notes from a best friend
 - ✓ A prayer, poem, or verse
 - ✓ A favorite CD or videotape cover
 - ✓ Seashells from a trip to the beach
4. From time to time, take out the family treasure box and look at the things in it with your child. You may want to do this activity more often when your child is feeling scared or sad.
- ✓ Talk about where each object came from. Ask your child to talk about his memories or feelings about each item and the special people or events the items remind him of.
 - ✓ Remind him that all of these people are in his heart and love him, no matter where they are. These people wish the best for him and will be there for him, always.

Activity 3: All about me

Children need to know that people love and care about them. You show this love everyday, but it's good for your child to hear you talk out loud and honestly about the special love you have for him. In this activity, you will create a special memory for your child using a video camera or tape recorder. By recording your memory, your child will be able to hear your voice or see your face, even when you aren't there, so he knows he is loved.

1. Tell a story about a special memory you have of your child. Have your child record you as you tell it. You may want to talk about:
 - ✓ The day your child was born
 - ✓ Your child's first trip to the zoo, the movies, or a museum
 - ✓ A special family dinner or birthday
 - ✓ Your child's favorite book or lullaby
 - ✓ The funniest memory of your child
2. Ask family members, grandparents, and other loved ones to tell their special story or favorite memory. Record these memories with your child. If your child is shy about hearing others talk about him, you may want to ask others to record their memories of your child.
3. Listen to the stories with your child. Encourage him to keep the stories in his heart. When he gets scared or worried, listening to the stories may help him feel better.

What you need

- ✓ Video camera or tape recorder

